

VZCZCXRO7343  
PP RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHMR RUEHPA RUEHRN RUEHTRO  
DE RUEHDS #0598/01 0710959  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 120959Z MAR 09  
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4062  
INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0521  
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 3270  
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT 0926  
RUZEFAA/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 7763  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RUEPADJ/CJTF HOA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ADDIS ABABA 000598

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/FO, AF/RSA, AF/E, AND IO/UNP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/12/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [AU](#) [SO](#)

SUBJECT: USAU: AU SOMALIA ENVOY BWAKIRA ON AMISOM SUPPORT

Classified By: AMBASSADOR DONALD YAMAMOTO, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) Summary: The AU's Special Representative for Somalia, Ambassador Nicolas Bwakira, told USAU on March 12 that Troop Contributing Countries and the African Union Commission are readying to make a strong pitch for stronger equipment and logistical support for AMISOM troops. They deem that international support, including from the United States, has been inadequate, erratic, and slow, preventing AMISOM from fulfilling its mission and adequately protecting the troops. Bwakira also expressed what he characterized as a broader AU concern that U.S. diplomatic efforts in support of AMISOM were waning. The AU has scheduled a meeting with international partners on March 23 to address these issues. On March 11, the Peace and Security Council voted to extend AMISOM's mandate by three months. End Summary.

¶2. (C) On March 12, the AU Commissioner's Special Representative for Somalia, Ambassador Nicolas Bwakira, met with USAU to review a meeting he had had two days earlier with senior Burundian government officials. He also provided a synopsis of the March 11 extraordinary meeting on Somalia that the AU Peace and Security Council held. The Peace and Security Council voted to extend AMISOM's mandate for an additional three months, to June 17. There was no discussion of changing AMISOM's mandate to increase the troops' rules of engagement. When a copy of the final communique is released, USAU will send it via e-mail.

¶3. (C) Bwakira requested a meeting with USAU in order to advise us of a March 23 meeting where AMISOM Troop Contributing Countries (Burundi and Uganda at the Minister of Defense level) and the AU Commission are expected to make a strong pitch for stronger equipment and logistical support for AMISOM troops. The meeting is part of what has now become a monthly series of exchanges on Somalia.

¶4. (C) Bwakira revealed that the MODs from Burundi and Uganda have told him that the equipment and logistic support for AMISOM troops is inadequate, erratic, and slow. He said they are likely to single out the U.S. in their criticism of the level of support (accommodations, ablution units, force protection, communications, rations, surveillance such as Night Vision Goggles, personal protection equipment).

¶5. (C) On the diplomacy front, Bwakira said that there is a perception on the part of the Troop Contributing Countries and the AU that the U.S. commitment to a peacekeeping operation was waning in the first part of 2009. He voiced concern that U.S. diplomatic efforts are weaker and less

focused, and there is a growing impatience on the African side to know what the U.S. policy toward Somalia is going to be. He urged greater U.S. diplomatic pressure on existing and potential Troop Contributing Countries that would send a clear message that the United States is as committed as ever to strengthening AMISOM and to an eventual transition to a UNPKO. He specifically urged U.S. support of a UNSC resolution for those PKO forces.

¶16. (C) With respect to equipment for AMISOM, Bwakira urged the US -- in the interest of time -- to consider the donation of critically needed equipment by other African member states to be reimbursed by the U.S. The slow pace of delivery, and the lack of adequate equipment and support, is putting troops at risk, he emphasized.

¶17. (C) In response to Bwakira, our side said we would convey this message to Washington. We acknowledged that both missions have received lists of equipment and support from the MODs in the past. Given recent events in Somalia, including the February 22 attack on AMISOM, the Troop Contributing Countries are clearly examining the level of support, not just for the augmentation battalions, but for the existing deployed troops. We are also aware -- and Bwakira confirmed this -- that the Burundians are committed to sending their third battalion to Mogadishu, on condition they are properly supported. Our recommendation is that our missions in Bujumbura and Kampala approach the respective MODs to seek clarification on their exact equipment and support concerns.

ADDIS ABAB 00000598 002 OF 002

¶18. (C) Responding to Bwakira's points about U.S. diplomatic efforts, we pointed out that the USG has been publicly supportive of newly elected Somali President Sheikh Sharif and the ongoing Somali political process, and that we have been continually engaged at the UNSC, with partners, and with African capitals in support of AMISOM.

¶19. (C) Comment: USAU enjoys a positive relationship with Bwakira and he is typically candid with us when we meet. We got the distinct impression from him that the March 23 meeting will be contentious and will target the USG. For this reason, we believe it is important that our Ambassador be prepared to address the concerns that are likely to be raised by the Troop Contributing Countries and even the AU Commission.  
YAMAMOTO